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News Release

July 17, 2007

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Governor Huntsman Asks for a Statewide Ban on Personal Fireworks

City, County Officials Encouraged to Take Action

Salt Lake City – Governor Jon Huntsman signed an emergency declaration today, in part, asking local government officials to ban personal fireworks in their jurisdictions because of wildland fire dangers. Fire restrictions, including fireworks, have already been established statewide on all state, federal and unincorporated lands.

“This week marks the beginning of this year's fire season, and with our State already coping with unprecedented loss of life and property due to record wildfires, extraordinary measures are called for,” Governor Huntsman said. “We must work together to protect life and property in these unusual circumstances, which is why I am calling on all municipalities to ban the personal use of fireworks in their jurisdiction.”

While the major wildfires Utah has experienced thus far are under containment, several new fires have recently been started by lighting, causing power outages and home evacuations. Utah has lost more than 600,000 acres of wildland to fire this year, despite the fire season only beginning this week.

“Through this emergency declaration, I am asking local leaders to join me in taking a step beyond those guidelines already put in place at the federal and state levels,” Governor Huntsman said. “There isn't much we can do about the unpredictability of Mother Nature, which is the cause of many fires. There is something, however, we all can do about human ignition of fires, which this year has been very costly.”

The declaration reads as follows:

FIRE EMERGENCY DECLARATION

Whereas, the danger from wildland fires is extremely high throughout the State of Utah;

Whereas, fireworks increase the risk of a wildland fire;

Whereas, the public is able to attend and enjoy professional fireworks displays in their communities;

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Whereas, many of Utah's cities and counties have urban wildland interface areas that are more susceptible to the dangers of wildland fires;

Whereas, many private residences, public and private infrastructure, critical watershed, and grazing and wildlife habitat are located in the urban wildland interface areas;

Whereas, numerous wildland fires are burning and continue to burn in various areas statewide and present a serious threat to public safety, property, natural resources and the environment;

Whereas, wildland fires are very costly to federal, state, and local governments as well as private citizens; and,

Whereas, immediate action is required to suppress the fires and mitigate post-burn flash floods to protect public safety, property, natural resources and the environment;

Now, Therefore, I, Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., Governor of the State of Utah, on this 17th day of July, 2007, do hereby call for the fire restrictions, including fireworks, implemented statewide by the State Forester continue in effect on state lands, unincorporated lands, and federal lands in conjunction with federal agencies; and,

Additionally, I request that local elected officials ban private fireworks in their jurisdictions.

Governor

For more information on fire restrictions go to www.utahfireinfo.gov.

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